

What is claimed is:

1. A tubular stabbing protector comprising: a plurality of body sections together forming a first opening and a second opening, the first opening sized to be secured over a pin end of an oilfield tubular and the second opening sized to fit over a connection to which the pin end of the oilfield tubular is to be engaged and opening away from the first opening; and a releasable lock between at least two adjacent body sections of the plurality of body sections, the releasable lock being automatically releasable when the second opening is fit over the connection to permit the plurality of body sections to separate sufficiently to release the pin end.
2. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 wherein the plurality of body sections are fully separable.
- 15 3. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 wherein the plurality of body sections are connected by a hinge and expandable by pivoting about the hinge.
4. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 wherein the first opening and the second opening are axially aligned.
- 20 5. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 wherein the first opening and the second opening are open to each other.
6. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 wherein the second opening includes an inner diameter change and includes a section with an effective inner diameter greater than the end face outer diameter of the connection and another section with an effective inner diameter less than the end face outer diameter of the connection.
- 25 30 7. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 wherein the second opening includes a frustoconically formed inner wall with an inner diameter reducing with depth into the opening.

8. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 wherein the first opening includes serrations.
- 5 9. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 8 wherein the serrations are formed as threads.
10. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 further comprising a trigger protrusion biased into the second opening and disposed to be forced radially outwardly to drive the plurality of body sections to expand, by placement of the second opening over the connection.
15. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 further comprising a pressure ramp in the second opening and disposed to be forced radially outwardly to drive the plurality of body sections to expand, by placement of the second opening over the connection.
20. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 wherein the lock includes a catch on one body section for engaging in a strike on an adjacent body section when the body sections are in the assembled position, the catch being actuatable to come out of engagement with the strike by placement of the second opening over the connection.
25. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 wherein the lock includes a catch on one body section for engaging in a groove on an adjacent body section when the body sections are in the assembled position, the catch being actuatable to come out of engagement with the groove by placement of the second opening over the connection.
30. 14. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 wherein the tubular stabbing protector is formed of a material including a polymer.

15. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 wherein the tubular stabbing protector is molded from a polymer.
16. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 further comprising an observation window through a body section.
17. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 1 wherein the lock includes a catch on one body section for engaging in a groove on an adjacent body section when the body sections are in the assembled form and a pressure ramp formed on the body section adjacent the catch, the pressure ramp extending into the second opening and disposed to be forced radially outwardly to drive the catch out of engagement with the groove, by placement of the second opening over the connection.
- 15 18. A tubular stabbing protector comprising: a plurality of body sections connectable into an assembled form, the plurality of body sections in the assembled form together forming a first opening and a second opening away from the first opening, the first opening sized to be secured over a pin end of an oilfield tubular and the second opening sized to fit over a connection to which the pin end of the oilfield tubular is to be engaged, and a lock for releasably holding the plurality of body sections together in assembled form and releasable to permit expansion of the plurality of body sections out of their assembled form, the lock being automatically releasable by application of force radially outwardly applied to the surface of the second opening, permitting the plurality of body sections to expand.
19. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 wherein the plurality of body sections are fully separable.
- 30 20. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 wherein the plurality of body sections are connected by a hinge and expandable by pivoting about the hinge.

21. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 wherein the first opening and the second opening are axially aligned.
22. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 wherein the first opening and 5 the second opening are open to each other.
23. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 wherein the second opening includes an inner diameter change and includes a section with an effective inner diameter greater than the end face outer diameter of the connection and another 10 section with an effective inner diameter less than the end face outer diameter of the connection.
24. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 wherein the second opening includes a frustoconically formed inner wall with an inner diameter reducing with 15 depth into the opening.
25. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 wherein the first opening includes serrations.
- 20 26. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 25 wherein the serrations are formed as threads.
27. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 further comprising a trigger 25 protrusion biased into the second opening and disposed to be forced radially outwardly to drive the plurality of body sections to expand, by placement of the second opening over the connection.
28. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 further comprising a pressure ramp in the second opening and disposed to be forced radially outwardly to drive 30 the plurality of body sections to expand, by placement of the second opening over the connection.

29. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 wherein the lock includes a catch on one body section for engaging in a strike on an adjacent body section when the body sections are in the assembled position, the catch being actuatable to come out of engagement with the strike by placement of the second opening over 5 the connection.

30. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 wherein the lock includes a catch on one body section for engaging in a groove on an adjacent body section when the body sections are in the assembled position, the catch being actuatable to 10 come out of engagement with the groove by placement of the second opening over the connection.

31. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 wherein the tubular stabbing protector is formed of a material including a polymer. 15

32. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 wherein the tubular stabbing protector is molded from a polymer.

33. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 further comprising an 20 observation window through a body section.

34. The tubular stabbing protector of claim 18 wherein the lock includes a catch on one body section for engaging in a groove on an adjacent body section when the body sections are in the assembled form and a pressure ramp formed on 25 the body section adjacent the catch, the pressure ramp extending into the second opening and disposed to be forced radially outwardly to drive the catch out of engagement with the groove, by placement of the second opening over the connection.

30 35. A method for connecting a tubular joint to a connector to form an oilfield tubular string, connecting a tubular stabbing protector over a pin end of the tubular joint, the tubular stabbing protector including a plurality of body sections

connectable into an assembled form, the plurality of body sections in the assembled form together forming a first opening and a second opening axially aligned and opening away from the first opening, the first opening sized to be secured over a pin end of an oilfield tubular and the second opening sized to fit

- 5 over a connection to which the pin end of the oilfield tubular is to be engaged, and a lock for releasably holding the plurality of body sections together in assembled form, the lock being releasable to permit expansion of the plurality of body sections out of their assembled form and being automatically releasable when the second end is fit over the connection to permit the plurality of body sections to
- 10 expand; moving the pin end toward the connection; fitting the second end over the connection; and stabbing the pin end toward the connection to automatically release the lock such that the plurality of body sections can expand out of engagement with the pin end.

- 15 36. The method of claim 35 wherein the tubular stabbing protector includes a trigger protrusion biased into the second opening and disposed to be forced radially outwardly by the connection to automatically release the lock.

- 20 37. The method of claim 35 wherein the tubular stabbing protector includes a pressure ramp in the second opening and disposed to be forced radially outwardly by the connection to automatically release the lock.

- 25 38. The method of claim 35 further comprising allowing the expanded tubular stabbing protector to fall to the drill floor once the plurality of body sections have expanded out of engagement with the pin end.

39. The method of claim 35 further comprising collecting the expanded tubular stabbing protector and connecting the tubular stabbing protector to another pin end.